

IV. TEMPORARY ADMISSIONS

The fiscal year 1997 nonimmigrant data were not available at the time of publication.

This section presents information on the number and characteristics of persons who come to the United States on a temporary basis (nonimmigrants), including parolees—persons allowed temporary entrance under special circumstances.

Nonimmigrants

A nonimmigrant is an alien admitted to the United States for a specified purpose and temporary period but not for permanent residence.

(See Appendix 3, p. A.3-7.)

Although the typical nonimmigrant is a tourist who visits for a few days to several months, there are numerous classes of nonimmigrant admission, ranging from students to ambassadors. A total of 24.8 million nonimmigrant

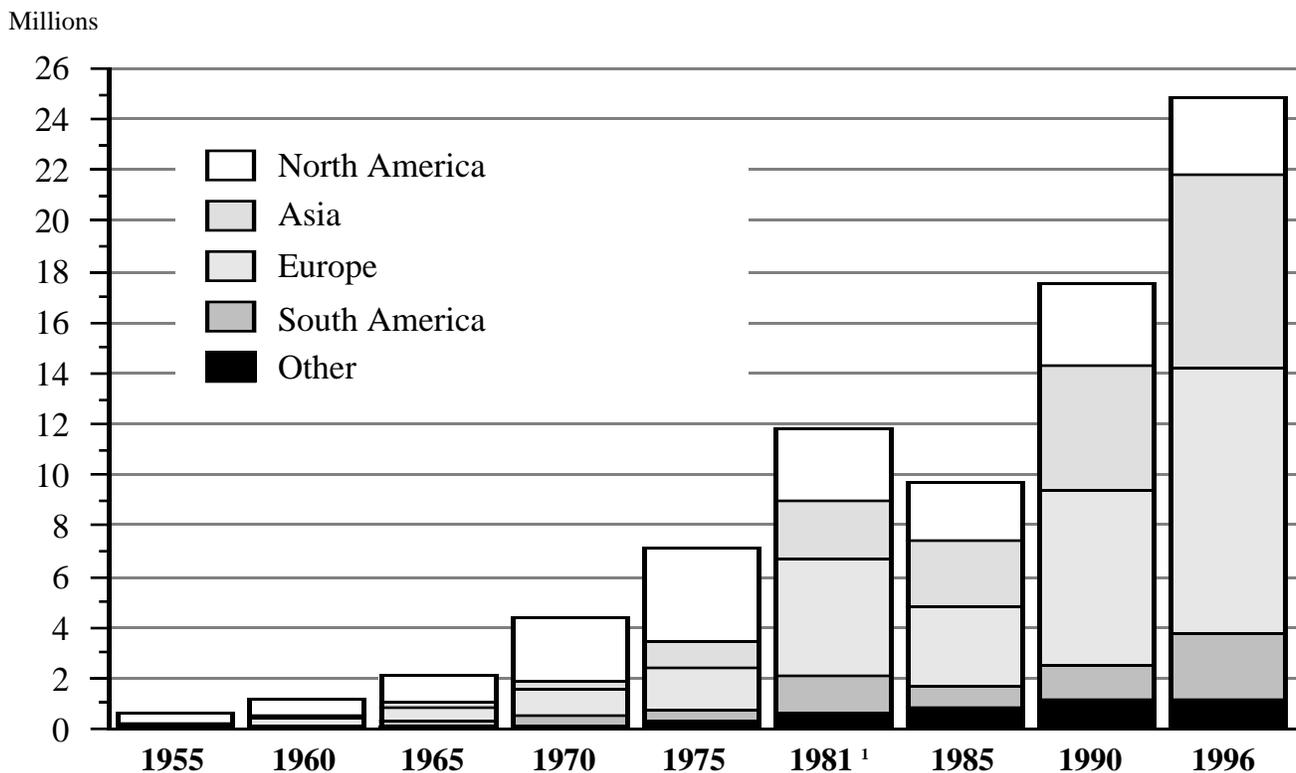
admissions were counted during fiscal year 1996—the largest number of nonimmigrant admissions to the United States in any year. This represents an increase of more than 2.2 million (9.7 percent) over 1995—the largest annual increase in the past several years.

U.S. Nonimmigrant Program

Nonimmigrants were first defined in the Immigration Act of 1819, but the Act of 1855 was the first to require the reporting of “temporary arrivals” separately. The Act of

Chart H

Nonimmigrants Admitted by Region of Last Residence: Selected Fiscal Years 1955-96



¹ No data available for 1980. NOTE: See Glossary for fiscal year definitions. Source: 1981, 1985, 1990, and 1996, Table 37; 1955-75, previous Yearbooks.

1924 defined several classes of admission that have been expanded in subsequent legislation. Though “tourists” (temporary visitors for pleasure) have consistently been by far the most numerous nonimmigrant class of admission to the United States, a wide variety of temporary visitors now fall within the nonimmigrant classification. Second in volume to tourists are business people coming to the United States to engage in commercial transactions (though not for employment in this country).

Nonimmigrant categories (Tables 37, 38, 39, 40, 43)

Other categories of admission make up a much smaller share of the nonimmigrant total, such as foreign students and temporary workers. Temporary workers are admitted to the United States to perform services of an exceptional nature (such as artists, athletes, or entertainers) or to perform temporary services or labor when persons capable of performing such services or labor cannot be

Table F
Nonimmigrants Admitted Under the Visa Waiver Pilot Program by Country of Citizenship:
Fiscal Years 1995-96

Country of citizenship	Visitors for pleasure				Visitors for business			
	1996	1995	Change		1996	1995	Change	
			Number	Percent			Number	Percent
All countries	11,192,978	9,407,254	1,785,678	19.0	1,370,452	942,538	427,909	45.4
Japan	3,957,102	3,771,807	185,295	4.9	269,298	215,583	53,715	24.9
United Kingdom	2,339,930	1,779,268	560,662	31.5	363,418	240,060	123,358	51.4
Germany	1,511,551	1,226,169	285,382	23.3	176,506	115,469	61,037	52.9
France	820,824	688,899	131,925	19.2	138,319	99,432	38,887	39.1
Italy	487,578	403,018	84,560	21.0	73,225	51,426	21,799	42.4
Netherlands	361,507	294,452	67,055	22.8	79,876	58,094	21,782	37.5
Switzerland	260,581	210,099	50,482	24.0	25,480	18,360	7,120	38.8
Spain	258,763	210,184	48,579	23.1	29,698	20,757	8,941	43.1
Sweden	156,479	114,811	41,668	36.3	52,687	36,183	16,504	45.6
Belgium	155,183	121,351	33,832	27.9	33,377	22,271	11,106	49.9
Austria	140,646	109,172	31,474	28.8	13,482	9,431	4,051	43.0
Ireland ¹	125,953	50,142	75,811	151.2	13,259	3,547	9,712	273.8
New Zealand	102,926	73,445	29,481	40.1	12,877	8,380	4,497	53.7
Denmark	80,998	58,868	22,130	37.6	22,046	14,280	7,766	54.4
Norway	70,364	50,847	19,517	38.4	20,777	12,593	8,184	65.0
Finland	48,189	37,818	10,371	27.4	15,091	10,526	4,565	43.4
Australia ²	25,922	X	X	X	4,818	X	X	X
Argentina ²	25,877	X	X	X	1,515	X	X	X
Iceland	11,664	7,494	4,170	55.6	1,541	856	685	80.0
Luxembourg	10,338	7,686	2,652	34.5	793	541	252	46.6
Liechtenstein	950	706	244	34.6	67	56	11	19.6
Brunei	606	465	141	30.3	120	74	46	62.2
Andorra	531	461	70	15.2	44	40	4	10.0
Monaco	478	389	89	22.9	23	14	9	64.3
San Marino	364	252	112	44.4	36	13	23	176.9
Unknown	237,582	189,451	48,177	25.4	21,978	4,552	17,431	382.9

¹ Admitted April 1, 1995. ² Admitted July 1, 1996. NOTE: Data include entries under the Guam Visa Waiver Program. Slovenia was added to the program on September 30, 1997; entries began during fiscal year 1998. X Not applicable.

found in this country (such as agricultural laborers). Others who are granted authorization to work temporarily in the United States include: exchange visitors who enter to study, teach, or conduct research; intracompany transferees, to render managerial or executive services in the United States to international firms or corporations; and industrial trainees. Though not strictly considered as employed in the United States, treaty traders and treaty investors enter temporarily to conduct trade or to invest substantially in enterprises under the provisions of treaties of commerce and navigation between the United States and foreign states.

Nonimmigrants also include several types of temporary visitors who are connected in some way with a foreign government or who represent an international organization. Ambassadors, public ministers, diplomats, and consular officers serve temporarily in this country, bringing with them members of their immediate families as well as personal employees, attendants, and servants. Officers and employees of international organizations such as the United Nations add to the list of nonimmigrant visitors entering the United States each year. The Glossary contains a detailed definition of nonimmigrants, a listing of each of the nonimmigrant classes of admission, and a detailed definition of each class.

Admission policy

The U.S. government has an “open door” policy for most nonimmigrant classes of admission. There are no restrictions on the total number of admissions each year; indeed, tourists (the majority of nonimmigrants) are encouraged to visit as a boon to the U.S. economy. Regulations govern such areas as the grounds for nonimmigrant admission, length and extension of stay, employment in the United States, accompaniment by family members, travel restrictions within the United States, and change of admission status. For example, ambassadors are allowed to remain in the United States for the duration of their service, students to complete their studies, visitors for business for a maximum of 6 months (plus 6-month extensions), and aliens in transit through the United States for not more than 29 days (with no extensions).

Employment (Tables 38, 39, 40, 43) family members

Most types of nonimmigrants are not allowed employment while in the United States, though exceptions may be granted, for example to students and to family members of international representatives. On the other hand, temporary workers come to the United States expressly for purposes of employment. Most nonimmigrant aliens may bring immediate family members with them; the exception is transit aliens other than foreign government officials. Transit aliens and fiance(e)s coming to the United States to

marry U.S. citizens are the only nonimmigrants who are prohibited from changing to another nonimmigrant category while in this country.

Visa Waiver Pilot Program (Table 39)

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 (see Appendix 1, p. A.1-19) authorized the establishment of a pilot program that permitted certain nonimmigrants from qualified countries to enter the United States on a temporary basis without nonimmigrant visas. The Visa Waiver Pilot Program (see Appendix 3, p. A.3-12) was originally extended only to approved countries that offered a reciprocal waiver of visas to U.S. citizens. The program is limited to admissions in the visitor for pleasure and for business classes of admission, with admission not to exceed 90 days. The Immigration Act of 1990 (see Appendix 1, p. A.1-20-21) revised the Visa Waiver Pilot Program and extended it through fiscal year 1994; subsequent legislation has further extended the program through fiscal year 2000. To date, 26 countries are members of the Visa Waiver Pilot Program.¹ Entries for fiscal year 1995 and 1996 are shown in Table F for current participant countries.

¹ Slovenia was added to the program on September 30, 1997; entries began during fiscal year 1998.

Country of citizenship	Visitors to Guam, FY 1996	
	For pleasure	For business
Total	160,413	1,819
Korea	138,743	1,390
Taiwan	13,589	97
United Kingdom ¹	4,745	98
Japan	1,128	6
Australia	965	88
Nauru	382	8
Indonesia	124	2
Singapore	65	11
New Zealand	75	5
Malaysia	63	17
Western Samoa	5	-
Papua New Guinea ...	9	1
Burma	8	1
Solomon Islands	8	-
Brunei	4	-
Vanuatu	-	-
Unknown	500	95

¹ Includes Hong Kong. - Represents zero.

Guam Visa Waiver Pilot Program

Under the Visa Waiver Pilot Program, certain visitors from designated countries may visit Guam for up to 15 days without first having to obtain nonimmigrant visitor visas. The table above shows the countries participating in this program and entries for fiscal year 1996.

North American Free-Trade Agreement

(Tables 38, 39, 40, 43)

In December 1992, the Presidents of the United States and Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada signed an agreement, enacted in December 1993, known as the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (see Appendix 1, p. A.1-22). This law superseded the United States-Canada Free-Trade Agreement, establishing a special, reciprocal trading relationship among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This agreement extended to the citizens of Mexico (with certain stipulations) and Canada the nonimmigrant class of admission exclusively for business people entering the United States to engage in activities at a "professional" level. Additionally, the agreement facilitates entry for Mexican as well as Canadian citizens seeking temporary entry as visitors for business, treaty traders and investors, and intracompany transferees.

Entries under NAFTA began in February 1994. Data for fiscal year 1996 are shown for both NAFTA and the United States-Canada Free-Trade Agreement in Table 39.

A record 24.8 million nonimmigrants were admitted to the United States during 1996.

Data Overview

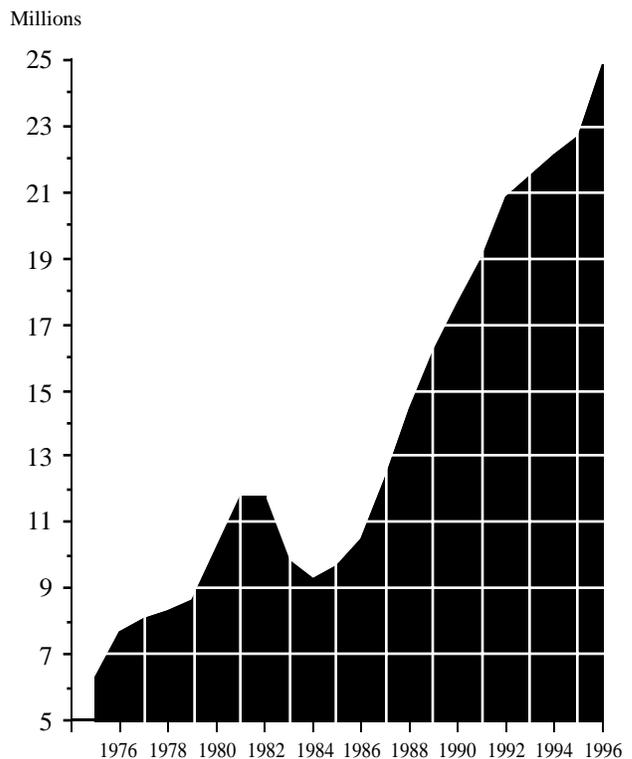
Recent trends in admission (Tables 37, 39)

As noted, the 1996 total of more than 24.8 million nonimmigrant arrivals represents an increase of more than 2.2 million (9.7 percent) from the previous fiscal year. Total nonimmigrant admissions numbered about 6.3 million during 1975 and steadily increased to about 11.8 million in both 1981 and 1982. The number stabilized at about 9.5 million from 1983 to 1985 (recording a low in 1984) then began a steady increase that continued from 1985 to 1996 (Chart I).

Class of admission (Tables 37, 38, 39, 40, 43)

Of the more than 24.8 million nonimmigrants who arrived in fiscal year 1996, a large majority (76.9 percent) entered as visitors for pleasure (tourists), with the next highest class of admission, temporary visitors for business, accounting for 15.2 percent. More than 215,000 persons

Chart I
Nonimmigrants Admitted: Fiscal Years 1975-96



NOTE: Data estimated for last quarter of 1979 and no data available for 1980. See Glossary for fiscal year definitions.
Source: Table 37 and previous Yearbooks.

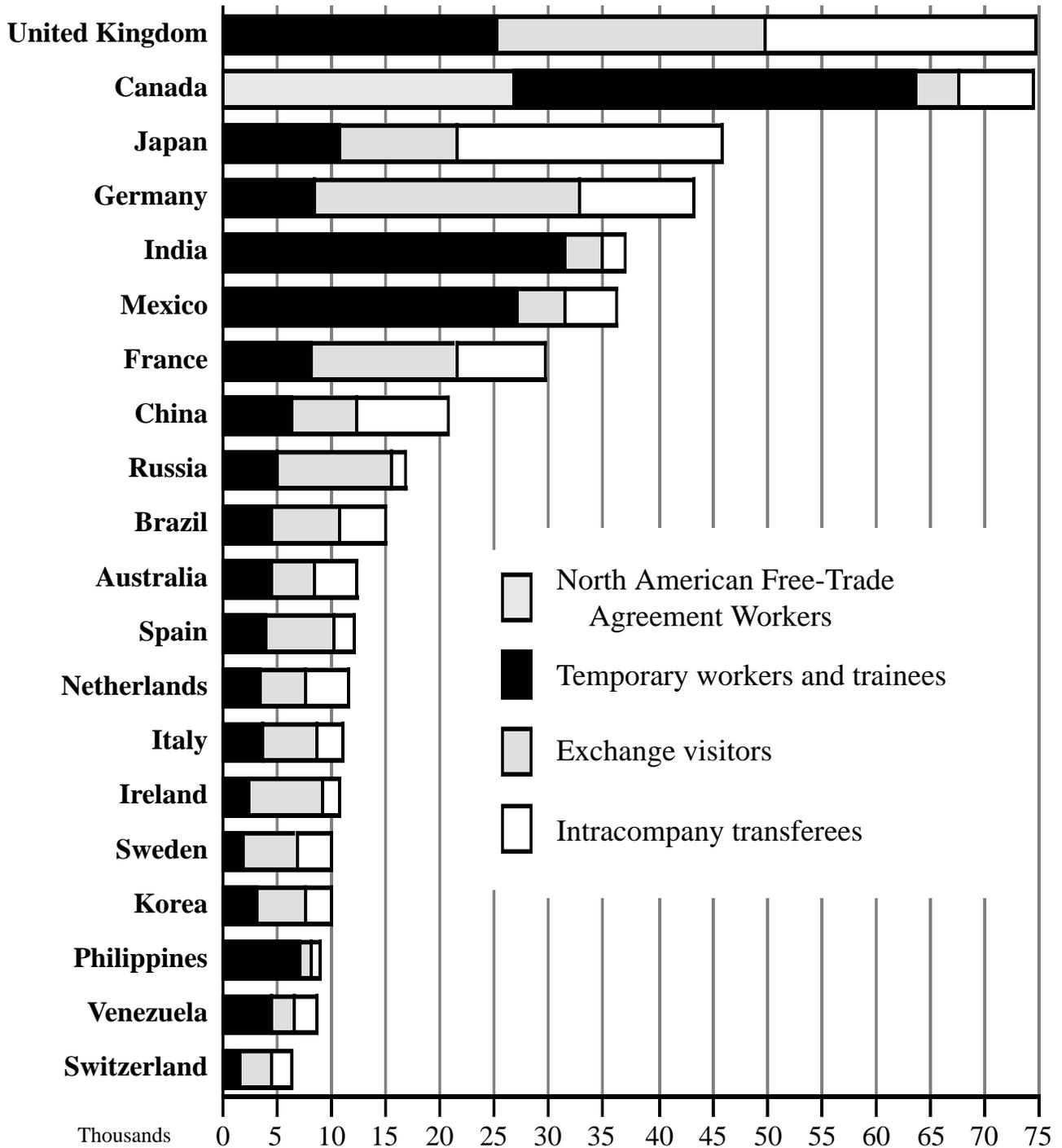
entered as exchange visitors to study, teach, or conduct research in the United States, bringing with them more than 41,000 spouses and children (Chart J). About 427,000 foreign students entered the United States to pursue a full course of study (predominantly in academic institutions) accompanied by more than 32,000 spouses and children (Chart K).

Nearly 209,000 representatives of foreign governments (less than 1 percent of total entries) entered the United States as nonimmigrants in 1996. This figure consists of more than 118,000 foreign government officials, family members, and attendants (including ambassadors, public ministers, career diplomats, and consular officers), nearly 80,000 foreign representatives to international organizations (including families and attendants), and nearly 11,000 officials serving the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (including family members).

Country of citizenship (Tables 38, 40, 41, 42)

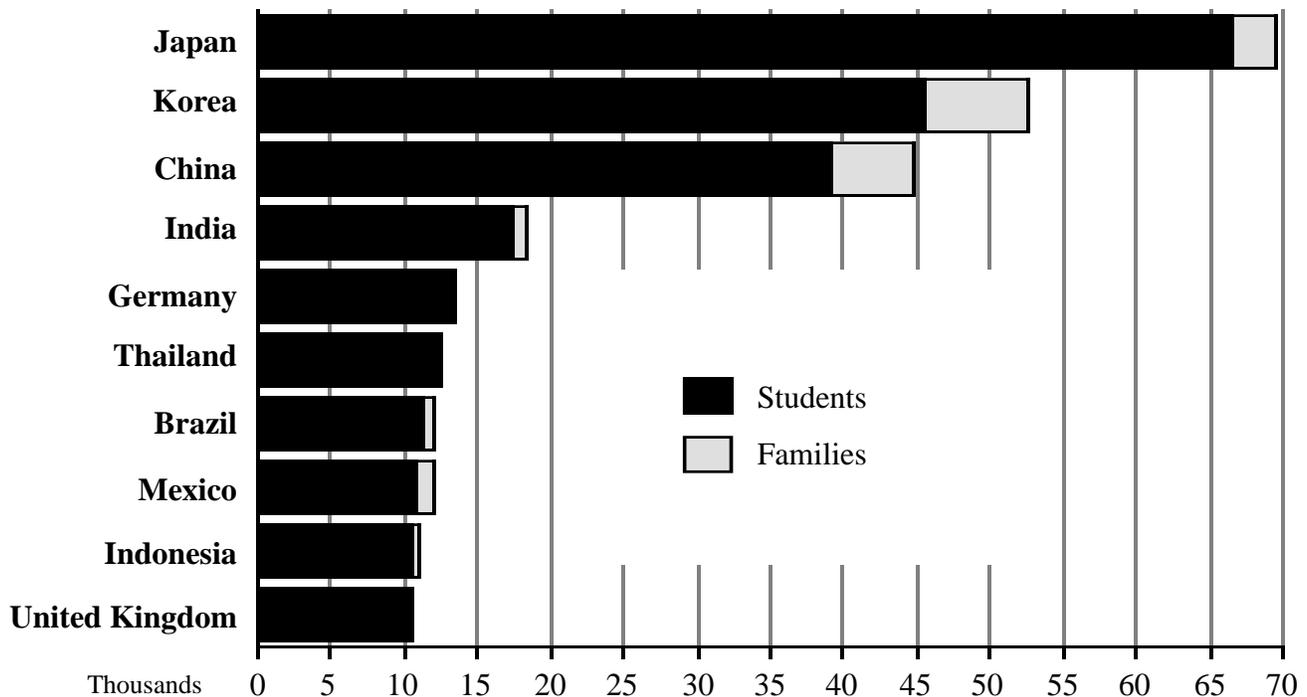
About 45 percent of all nonimmigrants arriving in 1996 were citizens of one of four countries: Japan (18.2 percent), the United Kingdom (13.6), Germany (8.2), and Mexico

Chart J
Nonimmigrants Admitted as Temporary Workers, Intracompany Transferees, and Exchange Visitors from Top Twenty Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 1996



NOTE: China includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan. "Temporary workers and trainees" includes admission classes H, O, P, Q, and R (see Nonimmigrant Admission section of text and Table 40). Also, see Glossary for definitions of nonimmigrant classes of admission. Source: Table 40.

Chart K
Nonimmigrants Admitted as Students and Their Families for Top Ten Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 1996



NOTE: China includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Source: Table 38.

(5.2). Tourists far outnumbered other classes of entry for almost every country of citizenship (Chart L). Nearly 89 percent of Japanese nonimmigrants were tourists (visitors for pleasure), compared to less than 80 percent of citizens of France, and only about 58 percent of Chinese (People's Republic of China and Taiwan)

Port of entry (Table 41)

Just as four countries dominated nonimmigrant admissions to the United States in 1996, so did four ports of entry. Miami (15.7 percent), New York (15.5), Los Angeles (11.5), and Honolulu (7.6) together accounted for half of all entrants. The Miami, New York, and Los Angeles ports maintained their share in 1996, while Honolulu decreased slightly from 1995.

Month of admission

Admissions have a high degree of seasonality, with most nonimmigrants arriving in the United States in the summer months (peaking in July); there is a lesser but noticeable secondary peak in December. The trends for 1993 through 1996 are illustrated in Chart M.

Parolees

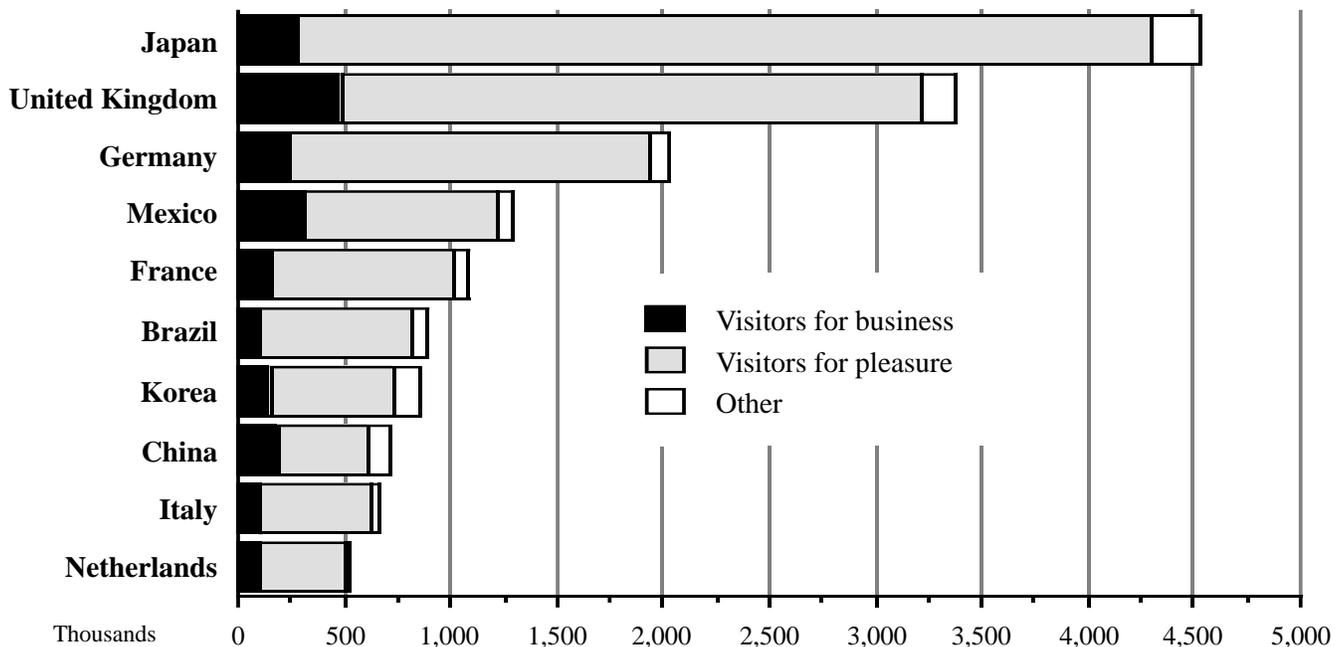
A parolee is an alien, appearing to be inadmissible to the inspecting officer, allowed to enter the United States under urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit.
 (See Appendix 3, p. A.3-8.)

Parole does not constitute a formal admission to the United States and confers temporary admission status only, requiring parolees to leave when the conditions supporting their parole cease to exist.

Authority to grant parole

The Attorney General has the authority to allow the temporary admission of an alien on a case-by-case basis who may appear inadmissible but who enters the United States under urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit. Parole does not constitute formal admission to the United States. It confers only temporary status, and parolees are required to leave when the conditions supporting their admission are ended.

Chart L
Nonimmigrants Admitted by Selected Class of Admission from Top Ten Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 1996



NOTE: China includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Source: Table 38.

U.S. Parole Program

Parolees are processed as nonimmigrants, but their numbers are not reported in the nonimmigrant admission data (Tables 37-43). They are usually classified into three main categories: deferred inspections, port-of-entry/district advance parolees, and humanitarian/public interest parolees. In recent years, more than 100,000 parole admissions have been authorized annually.

Categories of parole

Deferred inspection is used when an alien does not appear to be clearly admissible. The parole is issued and an appointment is made for the alien to appear at another INS office, where more information is available and the inspection can be completed. These cases are usually resolved within 2 weeks, and the alien is admitted in the appropriate category. Deferred inspection has also been used to admit people in special situations. For example, in fiscal year 1993 and 1994 more than 12,000 nationals of El Salvador were given deferred inspection. Many of them were members of the ABC class (see Asylum section) admitted to file or renew claims for asylum.

Parole may also be granted by advance arrangement with an INS District Office or, more commonly, at a port of entry. About half of all parole admissions are of this type. These

cases are most common at the land border ports and often involve the reentry of permanent resident aliens who are not carrying their documents. Again, these cases are typically resolved rapidly when the documents are produced.

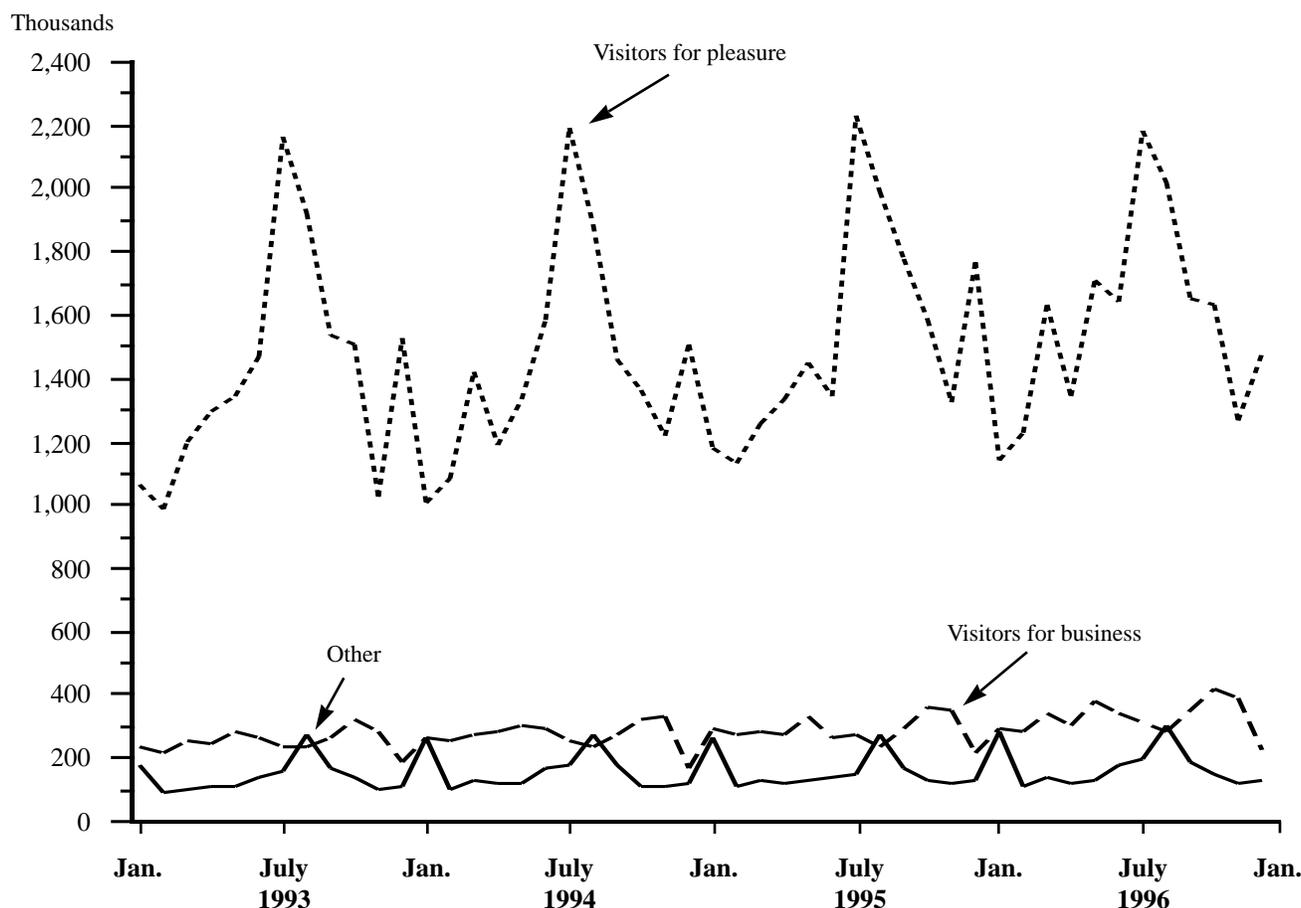
Within the broad category of humanitarian parole, people may be admitted to receive medical treatment, to take part in legal proceedings as witnesses or defendants, or as part of a special overseas program. The latter category is the only one that may constitute a long-term admission to the United States.

Nearly 134,000 parolees were admitted to the United States during 1996.

Country of citizenship

Table G displays the total number of parolees admitted from fiscal year 1992 through fiscal year 1996 by the three major categories of parole. Within each category, the five countries accounting for the largest number of parole admissions are shown. Our neighboring countries, Canada and Mexico, account for the most parolees in the deferred inspections and port-of-entry/district advance categories.

Chart M
Nonimmigrants Admitted by Month and Selected Class of Admission: Calendar Years 1993-96



Parolees from the United Kingdom and the Philippines also appear frequently in those categories.

Country of citizenship for humanitarian parole

Table H presents more detail for the same years regarding admissions under the humanitarian parole categories. The annual numbers admitted have fluctuated according to the operations of the special overseas programs that account for the majority of admissions in this category. In 1994 and especially 1995 and 1996, most of the overseas parolees were Cubans under the 1994 migration agreement with Cuba. In 1992 and 1993, a total of about 11,000 Haitians were admitted to file claims for asylum. Most of the parolees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and the former Soviet Union arrived under special legislation after being denied refugee status.² These persons are allowed to adjust to immigrant status after one year of residence in the United States. As the declining numbers from these countries show, these admissions are waning.

² The Foreign Operations Act of November 21, 1989 (see Appendix 1, p. A.1-20). This provision is commonly known as the Lautenberg Amendment.

About half of the 10,000 humanitarian parolees admitted annually for medical and related reasons are from Canada and Mexico. The rest come in small numbers from many other countries. Likewise, most of the several thousand annual admissions under public interest parole for legal and related reasons are from Canada and Mexico.

Understanding the Data

Data Collection

The Nonimmigrant Information System (NIIS) is designed to provide for each nonimmigrant a record of legal admission and departure. The system also produces statistics for such variables as age, country of citizenship, class of admission, visa-issuing post, port of entry, and destination in the United States. Many nonimmigrants enter and leave the United States more than once each year and the NIIS system records each entry separately.

A description of the principal steps in the process of nonimmigrant admission to the United States is useful for

Table G
Parolees Admitted by Selected Class of Admission from Top Five Countries of Citizenship:
Fiscal Years 1992-96

Class of admission/ Country of citizenship	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
All parolees	137,478	123,490	111,403	113,542	133,503
Deferred inspections	18,970	27,819	23,742	9,311	7,952
Mexico	5,568	6,340	6,255	1,742	1,630
United Kingdom	661	686	555	404	463
Canada	1,046	1,017	884	670	452
El Salvador	548	7,893	4,893	656	233
Philippines	546	641	524	349	228
Other	10,601	11,242	10,631	5,490	4,946
Port-of-entry & district advance parolees	70,937	63,348	58,824	61,019	95,415
Mexico	12,244	11,548	11,761	15,182	21,488
Canada	3,412	3,288	2,754	3,695	6,406
United Kingdom	2,403	2,195	1,918	2,456	5,371
Philippines	8,078	4,916	3,664	3,118	2,964
Cuba	1,617	1,402	3,998	3,016	2,200
Other	43,183	39,999	34,729	33,552	56,986
Humanitarian, public interest, and overseas parolees	47,571	32,323	28,837	43,212	30,136
Cuba	1,600	3,220	9,149	28,139	17,463
Mexico	4,585	5,068	4,974	3,454	2,539
Canada	1,700	1,677	1,807	2,039	1,972
Soviet Union (former)	5,426	2,270	1,909	1,697	1,143
Vietnam	16,998	7,585	4,824	1,477	270
Other	17,262	12,503	6,174	6,406	6,749

understanding the data produced by the NIIS system. First, a nonimmigrant visa is secured at a U.S. Consulate abroad (except for those entering under the Visa Waiver Pilot Program—see Nonimmigrant Admission section). These visas may be valid for multiple visits to the United States. Prior to departing for the United States, nonimmigrants are screened initially by the transportation company to insure that their documents are in order. During the trip, INS Form I-94 is distributed to non-U.S. citizens.

At the port of entry, each arriving nonimmigrant presents a visa, which is usually stamped in the passport, and a completed Form I-94 to an immigration inspector. Among other actions, the inspector checks the form for completeness, determines the length of admission, and stamps the class of admission and port of entry on the form. The arrival portion is torn off and sent to a central data processing facility. The matching departure section of the form, usually stapled into the passport, is the nonimmigrant's proof of legal admission to the United States. This section of Form I-94, collected at departure,

is also sent to the data processing facility where it is processed and matched electronically to the arrival section of the form.

Other temporary visitors

The Nonimmigrant Information System also includes information on parolees (*e.g.*, entering for humanitarian, medical, or legal reasons), withdrawals, stowaways, deferred inspections (allowed to enter to appear at an INS office where formal inspection can be completed), and refugees. Data for these classes of admission are not shown in the nonimmigrant tables but are included in summary form in footnotes to the appropriate tables. Additionally, refugee data are shown in the Refugee section and parolee data in the Parolee section of the text and tables.

Temporary visitor information not collected

The Nonimmigrant Information System also does not include data for permanent resident aliens returning after short visits abroad or for most of the millions of citizens of Canada and Mexico who cross the border for brief periods

Table H
Parolees Admitted by Selected Category of Humanitarian Parole from Selected Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Years 1992-96

Class of admission/ Country of citizenship	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
All humanitarian parolees	47,571	32,323	28,837	43,212	30,136
Overseas parolees & special programs ¹	34,378	16,901	16,471	32,262	19,081
Cuba	1,600	3,220	9,149	28,139	17,463
Soviet Union (former)	5,426	2,270	1,909	1,697	1,143
Vietnam	16,998	7,585	4,824	1,477	270
Haiti	9,199	3,005	212	415	96
Cambodia	998	726	94	57	25
Other	157	95	283	477	184
Humanitarian parolees (medical and related reasons)	10,680	10,128	10,335	8,878	8,836
Land border countries:					
Mexico	3,542	4,265	4,290	2,922	2,184
Canada	1,337	1,177	1,295	1,369	1,377
Other countries:					
Pakistan	81	218	472	433	516
India	167	209	344	259	276
China, People's Republic	257	287	381	256	325
Bangladesh	53	65	190	249	184
United Kingdom	288	216	132	198	226
Philippines	683	294	210	185	147
Other	4,272	3,397	3,021	3,007	3,601
Public interest parolees (legal and related reasons)	2,513	5,294	2,031	2,072	2,119
Land border countries:					
Mexico	1,035	796	628	489	338
Canada	359	499	482	612	588
Other countries	1,119	3,999	921	971	1,193

¹ Includes parole authorized by an INS overseas office and persons from the same countries with other humanitarian parole codes.

of time. Most aliens entering the United States from Canada or Mexico do not require documentation in the NIIS system. Canadians may travel for business or pleasure without travel restrictions for a period of 6 months without obtaining nonimmigrant visas. Mexicans crossing the border frequently may apply for border crossing cards which can be used for admission to the United States for business or pleasure within 25 miles of the Southwestern border for a period not to exceed 72 hours.

Limitations of Data

A new data system was developed, and put into place in mid-1996. While the new system introduced needed improvements in many of the data processing functions, start-up difficulties have led to less complete capture of some data items for fiscal year 1996, such as port of entry

and state of intended residence. The detailed tables have been appropriately footnoted, citing "processing errors" for the increased number of "unknown" for certain variables. While the total number of nonimmigrant admissions has not been affected, caution must be exercised in interpreting the data. As noted, data for fiscal year 1997 do not appear in this edition due to data inconsistencies resulting from the reengineering of both the data entry and data base management components of the Nonimmigrant Information System.

As mentioned, the data system records arrivals via collection of INS Form I-94; thus, data represent each arrival event during the year rather than the actual number of individuals admitted. Nonimmigrants in several classes of admission, especially students, intracompany

transferees, and visitors for business, often enter (and leave) many times in any given year.

Also, changes in the procedures for processing student records, whereby certain records were prematurely moved off-line and subsequently not included in annual totals, resulted in a substantial underreporting in the number of student arrivals for 1991 through 1993. These procedures have been revised and new student arrival figures developed for these years. Table 39 reflects revised student arrival

counts as well as minor differences in numbers for other classes of admission and country of last residence.

Missing information

Finally, there are gaps in the historical nonimmigrant data series due to the unavailability of arrival and departure records for July to September 1979, all of 1980, and for most characteristics for 1981 and 1982. Country of last residence and class of admission are the only variables available for 1981 and 1982. No reliable data are available for 1997.